THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" (a) Yes. Sir, two Unions have been organized, viz., The Nilgiris District Estate Workers' Union, Ootacamund, and the Anamalai Estates Labour Welfare Union, Valparai. The former had a membership of 2,555 at the time of registration, viz., 1st July 1947. The application of the Anamalai Estates Labour Welfare Union, Valparai, has been returned to them by the Registrar of Trade Unions for rectifying certain defects.

" (b) Yes. Sir.

" (c) Yes. Sir. The Estates Staff Union of South India, Glenview, Coonoor, applied for registration under the Indian Trade Unions Act and it was registered on 24th March 1947.

" (d) No. Sir.

" (e) The Estate Staff Union and Estate Staff Association, Anamalais and the National Plantation Labour Union, Valparai, asked for the appointment of a Board of Arbitration to enquire into and remedy the grievances of estate workers. As the Rege Committee has already made a comprehensive survey of plantation labour and as two special Labour Welfare Officers have been appointed to look after their interests, it is not considered necessary to institute a fresh enquiry in this matter."

SRI P. R. K. SARMA :—" May I know, Sir, by whom these Welfare Officers have been appointed, whether they have been appointed by the Government or by the employers?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" They have been appointed by the Government."

SRI P. R. K. SARMA :—" May I know whether these Welfare Officers are empowered to enquire into the conditions of labour and to make recommendations to the Government?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" They have been empowered to make recommendations."

SRI P. R. K. SARMA :—" Do the Government propose to take any action on those recommendations?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" It is open to the Welfare Officer to make recommendations to the Government and bring to the notice of Government conditions of labour employed on the plantations and if it is necessary, Government will certainly look into the matter."

SRI P. R. K. SARMA :—" May I ask the Government, Sir, whether these Welfare Officers work under the supervision of the Commissioner of Labour or the employers concerned?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" They are working under the Commissioner of Labour."

Ban on rice mills.

* 98 Q.—SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO: Will the Hon. the Minister for Food be pleased to state—

(a) whether it is a fact that the Madras Government have banned the starting of new rice mills;

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(*b*) if so, whether the attention of the Government is drawn to the fact that this action confers on the existing mill owners a monopoly of milling rice and that the open competition in the field is thus restricted;

(*c*) whether the agricultural labour essential for food production is being diverted for milling rice; and

(*d*) whether the Government have considered the hardship caused by this order to those persons who wish to have hulling as a subsidiary occupation when they nstal engines or pumping water for oil mills?

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" (*a*) to (*d*).—It is a fact that with a view to encourage the handpounding of paddy and the consumption of handpounded rice, the Government prohibited in January 1947 the issue of licences for the opening of new rice mills. At the time the order was issued, the Government had before them a proposal to manufacture and supply a large number of Japanese type of hullers called "Rama Hullers" for the purpose of converting paddy into rice as these hullers produced rice comparable in quality with handpounded rice. It is however since found that the cost of manufacture of these hullers is high and that they are of doubtful economic value. The proposal to manufacture these hullers has therefore been given up. It has been represented to the Government that in the absence of facilities for manufacturing handpounded rice on the required scale, the ban on the licensing of new mills operated as a great hardship as handpounding was not an economical proposition owing to the scarcity of labour and high wages

11-15 a.m. and as the number of existing mills was not sufficient to cope speedily with the work of conversion into rice. In view of these representations the Government have since cancelled the orders in respect of areas of the Province outside the firkas selected for intensive Rural reconstruction. The ban will continue to be in force in the selected firkas till the end of December 1947 when the matter will be considered again."

SRI C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIYAR :—" What is the idea of the Government with regard to manufacturing Japanese hullers and substituting them for the polishing machines?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" The hullers are not intended for polishing, Sir. The name Japanese huller is given because the model is after a Japanese type but there are hullers called Rama hullers. The name has been given to it after the man who invented it and they were made in the Engineering Workshops here."

SRI C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIYAR :—" Are these hullers being manufactured now, Sir?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Because it was not an economic proposition Government had to give up its manufacture."

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SRI C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIYAR :—" Sir, is it not possible to give facilities for this type of hullers and get them substituted for the foreign hullers that we are getting?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" This question does not arise for the reason that these hullers that are now being in use are very different from the Rama hullers that was designed. It was a small machine worked by two people and the turnover was very small. They were originally intended to be introduced in villages but the cost of production was so very high that it was not possible to continue with it."

SRI C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIYAR :—" Are the Government aware that big power worked machines are also manufactured in the Government workshops?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" No, Sir. The Government had to give up this work of manufacturing power driven machines since the scheme did not work."

SRI B. BHIMA RAO :—" Due to the shortage of labour even in those selected firka areas will the Government issue instructions to the Collectors of the district to use their discretion in the matter of granting these licences?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" The idea of the Government is to introduce handpounded rice because it is feasible that such handpounded rice can be produced in the villages concerned. That is why firkas were selected and were asked to use handpounded rice. The Government therefore thought it unnecessary to introduce big hullers and this experiment will continue for three months more after which the whole thing will be reviewed."

* 99 *Q.*—

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" I am afraid the answer is rather long and if you would permit, Sir, I would like to have this typed and circulated on the next day of the sitting of the Council."

(Postponed.)

Purchase of gunny bags by the Civil Supplies Department.

* 100 *Q.*—SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO : Will the Hon. the Minister for Food be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Civil Supplies Department purchases a large quantity of empty gunnies of various sizes;

(*b*) if the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, what the quantity purchased till now is;

(*c*) whether tenders are called for the supply of gunnies;

(*d*) whether a firm in Vizagapatam was asked to supply a large number of gunnies without calling for tenders, and, if so, what the quantity and cost of these gunnies were; and

(*e*) What considerations influenced the Government to give up the tender system?"